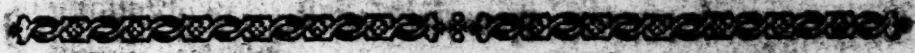


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A
POETICAL EPISTLE

TO

The Right Hon. LORD M*****.



Price One Shilling and Six pence.

POLITICAL EPISTLES

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE LORDS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

1755

THE RIGHT HONORABLE LORDS

POLITICAL EPISTLES

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE LORDS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

BY JOHN WILKES

OF THE CITY OF LONDON

PRINTED BY J. WILKES

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K

By a GENTLEMAN
OF THE KING'S BENCH PRISON.

—JUSTITIA FIAT—

LONDON:

Printed for the AUTHOR:

And Sold by WILLIAM BINGLEY, at his Shop opposite Durham-yard in the
Strand. 1768.

POETICAL EPISTLE

TO

The Right Hon. LORD MANSFIELD

By a GENTLEMAN

OF THE KING'S BENCH PRISON.

—JUSTITIA TRIAT—



And sold by William Duncanson, opposite Duncanson's, in the Strand, 1782.

(v)

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN EARL OF B***

Now upon his Travels.

MY LORD

Y

OUR LORDSHIP will not be so
much surpris'd at my impertinence
in prefixing your very illustrious
name to these few pages, when you reflect,
that it is as absolutely necessary for an author
to make choice of the FAVOURITE to head
his writings, as for a LAWYER, whose eye is
fixed on the seals, to worship him as his idol.

B

To

To make matters fit easy, it is the business of the one to draw up a long catalogue of noble exploits, which his patron never dreamt of; to soften him with gilded epithets, which by no means correspond with his actions, and to gratify his vanity with a profusion of praises of which he is totally undeserving. The employment of the other, is, in every degree to become his slave; to go, and come, at command; to pervert his own reason and understanding to keep time with his, and to administer or withhold JUSTICE as he shall condescend to direct him.

As an AUTHOR, I must beg leave to wave so necessary a part of my duty. Let LAWYERS act upon LAW Principles. Be mine those of JUSTICE, EQUITY, and TRUTH.

I cannot however but remark to your Lordship, that you are greatly missed from the topmost round of Ambition's ladder. How you reached that pinnacle of Greatness is no wonder

der to any one of a moment's reflection; but in what unparallel'd miraculous manner you descended unhurt, is the admiration of all the politicians from the Royal Exchange to St. JAMES'S. The Poet indeed tells us

" When WOMAN plots our ruin, we're undone :

" But when she loves, she beats off ev'ry foe

" And guides us on to safety and to bliss ;

" Smooths ev'ry thorny path, and quickly calms

" The raging tempest of a guilty soul."

HAIL, happy man !---the fondling of the---
age ! Thrice happy you, who have rioted so
luxuriously on power, and every other sensual
enjoyment worthy so great a soul, and yet ne-
ver once lost sight of that darling being THY-
SELF. Many, like you, have gained the sum-
mit of greatness ; but how few, like you, have
known to make a wise and safe retreat !, or
knowing, have pursued it ;---Many, tis true,
have reach'd the same dangerous height, but
have been so intoxicated with it's allurements,

as

as to fall wretched sacrifices to their own blindness and stupidity.

WILKES may feast on the ideal happiness of LIBERTY; but let him, rash man, if he wishes to enjoy that LIBERTY in reality, on his bended knees implore the smiles of thy benign countenance. Let him and his inconsiderate adherents pant after popular applause;---the applause of a factious, discontented world. Such gratifications, I am sensible, you despise, tho' from what motives I am not well apprised. You may say notwithstanding, with your worthy noble colleague, that you "*will have popularity; THAT popularity which follows, and not that which is run after.*" Debar'd even that, you must have left the pleasing raptures of an indulgent conscience, and the secret approbation of a heart *void* of offence towards God and your COUNTRY.

It is not my business here to inform you, with what pleasure the refin'd part of the species

species talk of you, and with what ecstasy they dwell upon your name.

Your hasty departure from England has had strange impressions on the minds, and unsalutary effects upon the constitutions of your nearest and dearest friends. They think themselves entirely abandoned by you to the artful stratagems of undermining men, and wear imprinted on every feature the visible marks of terror and distress.

AN INSTANCE:

Walking tother day near BLOOMSBURY-SQUARE, I met, by meer chance, the carriage of your bosom friend and countryman, directing its course, as I imagined, towards St. JAMES'S. The horses moved on with a melancholly slowness; and the coachman seemed an index to that burthen of distress, he was driving to the C---t C---l. Within l---was a spectacle that would drag commiseration from the flinted breast, and disarm a WILKES of every

C

revengful

revengful thought. Paint to your Lordship's own imagination the contrast, between the teeming beauties of Summer, when the beams of the all-reviving sun shoot serenely down, and gild the scene,---and the chilling aspect of Winter, when every friendly ray is withdrawn, that might cheer the gloomy prospect, or dispel the boistrous tempest. As widely different as those seasons are from each other, is the man You once saw in the sunshine of power, who under the shadow of thy wing ever found protection,---from the man that now languishes for thy return. In those eyes that used to look into the inmost recesses of the soul---in those eyes that were wont to light the torch of Love, I beheld one moment the looks of Rage, Revenge, and Madness; the next of gloomy Despair. In short, he appear'd to me so reduced in his forlorn state, as to resemble no other human being but that, the portrait of which remarkable one Mr. CHURCHILL has given us
by

by way of frontispiece to his PROPHECY OF FAMINE.

I could tell your Lordship, that many are prevented from paying those necessary and respectful services they were indebted to you, and intended themselves the happiness of doing; but it will be altogether needless, as I doubt not, upon your return (if that day ever comes) you will find the same zealous spirit still alive, which animates the breast, and is the genuine characteristic of a true-born ENGLISHMAN.

I am afraid I have trespassed much too long upon your Lordship's patience, and greatly exceeded the liberties of a DEDICATOR; I shall therefore only express my happiness in chusing in the *Patron* and *Hero* of these sheets, two of the most respectable characters of the age: Men mutually linked together by the bonds of friendship, and the laws of their country;--- congenial in their system of politics, principles, and dispositions, and every way meriting

ting those repeated marks of *honor*, daily
heaped upon them by the Public.

I am, my Lord,

(With all due Respect,)

Your Lordship's

most obliged,

most devoted, and

obedient humble servant,

King's Bench Prison, }
September 15, 1768.

The AUTHOR.

POETICAL EPISTLE

TO THE

Rt. Honourable LORD M*****

MY LORD, how abject is the present time
 When half-starv'd poets are forbid to rhyme!
 When poor prose-writers feel an inward dread
 Of *Northern* blasts, and trembling hide their head!

D

Start

Start not ;---but learn whence springs the potent
cause.

Authors are taught subjection to the *Laws* :
Are made with bended knee to kiss the rod,
And tread an humble path before ne'er trod.

I (p'rhaps too eager in my rapid flight)
Boldly declare to You I fearless write.
No cringing minion to a titled knave,
I scorn and curse the very name of slave.
The hell-born wretch whose birth-right's to be fold,
Who'll damn himself and all mankind for gold,
Who dreads the frowns and threatnings of the
great,
He's the fit vassal for the tools of state.
Let threats of dungeons work him to their will ;
Firm and untainted I'll continue still :

'Tis

For gloomy dungeons have no weight with me,
Who boast a spirit truly brave, as free.

Britannia owns my birth : Her son,
I claim that freedom my forefathers won
With god-like zeal : a deed I dearly prize,
A deed that rais'd them to the starry skies.

'Tis well, blunt scribbling culprits to disgrace,
To root out all the truth-unfolding race.

I yield with you, as with the sage of old,

“ *At all times even truth should not be told.* ”

Curs'd be the busy wretch that dares disclose
A SCOTCHMAN's crimes to his insulting foes ;
Let him of fetters have the heaviest load,
And *Newgate* be his mansion of abode.

While thus I deal perdition to the crew,
My thoughts, my Lord, are chiefly bent on you.

On

On you, who here I cannot once commend,
 For fear such open flatt'ry should offend,
 So known thy native worth,---thy modest pride,
 Who'll dare to say but Justice is thy guide?
 That Justice, temper'd with a god-like zeal,
 To serve thy---, if not the common weal.

I mean not here thy private acts to trace,
 To call up blushes in a Judge's face :
 Think not I mean to wound thy tender ear
 With adulation, spawn of conscious fear :
 These I'll consign to men of blacker dye
 (If such be found) than M---, B---, or I.
 Could I thy delicacy lull to sleep,
 Some tales I'd tell, unwilling now I keep,
 Some secret deeds I here would bring to view,
 Such as concern *Britannia's* sons and You.

But

But tho' your Lordship's niceness may detest
 The too rough frankness of an honest breast,
 Nay, should it happen that I make you frown,
 And on myself bring heavy judgment down,
 Some little truths, that tingle at my heart,
 You must---shall hear, C---- J---- tho' thou art

Law, newly moulded by thy magic hand,
 Now spreads in various shapes th' astonish'd land;
 No more in simple garb attir'd, but clad
 With gaudy trappings made of SCOTTISH PLAID,
 The pretty queen eludes our purblind eyes;
 And every day acts deeper in disguise.
 In days of yore she wore a doubtful face;
 But yet her sons could sometimes hit a case.
 Some now and then obtain'd a just decree,
 Who priz'd their conscience dearer than a fee.

E

Then

Then was she dress'd like any common wench,
 For honest hum-drums nodded on the Bench ;
 For they her Chiefs too clear were understood,
 And fought for nothing but the public good.
 But now,---in wiser times, fresh causes spring
 To have her moderniz'd a different thing.
 'Tis now she's taught to rear aloft her head,
 And strike all little knaves with inward dread.
 Rais'd from that hackney'd, common paltry jade,
 She stands confess'd the gaudy subtle maid.
 Honor retires whenever she appears,
 And poor Sincerity's o'erwhelm'd with fears.
 Ev'n simple truth and reason soon withdraw
 To leave an ample space for mighty Law.

HEALTH to the man!--the man ordain'd by fate
 Who timely rais'd her from her grov'ling state.

HEALTH

HEALTH wait on him! who with an aspect kind
 Reliev'd the cares of her despairing mind;
 Who all her silly actions put aside,
 And deck'd her giddy front with awful pride,
 To him be rais'd a lasting shrine of fame;
 In gold be carv'd thereon his noble name:
 BRITONS, with gratitude your incense give,
 Or else repine not, ye no longer live.
 Nay WILKES refuse your tribute if you can,
 For lument, meek-eyed M--- is the man.

My Lord, for once your council let me crave.
 Is man deem'd honest till he's prov'd a knave?
 If so, in prison why's he doom'd to dwell?
 Is it because his soul's not black as hell?
 Is it because his zealous bosom glows
 With heavenly fire to root out Britain's foes?

To

To pull them down from off their wonted seat
 And lay them prostrate at his godlike feet?
 The Gods forbid.--- Forbid the curs'd decree
 Britannia's guardian angel LIBERTY.
 Is truth a libel when it's public made?
 Must its professors learn to curse their trade?
 Must men for fear of M-----l art
 Speak words quite foreign to an honest heart?
 For fear of LAW's each stratagem and wile
 Must they their looks and sentiments beguile?
 Shall LAW her mercy from that man with-hold
 Merely because he cannot bribe with gold?
 Shall he in darkness pine his days away,
 When giant knaves eclipse the face of day?
 Forbid it heav'n! Forbid the curs'd decree
 Britannia's guardian angel LIBERTY!

To

To you, my Lord, I freely speak my mind:
 Thou friend of WILKES! thou patriot of mankind!
 Should I too giddy in my full career,
 Say things by chance to wound a courtier's ear;
 If I too freely should express my hate
 Of factious knaves, and curse the tools of State,
 Be thou my pilot: steer me from the crimes
 Repugnant to these upright--honest times.
 If I, fool-hardy, have forsook the shore
 Of dear self-preservation, teach me no more
 To be deluded by a flatt'ring breeze,
 Nor trust again my bark on dang'rous seas.
 Grateful I'll thank thee with a bended knee;
 But gold I have none would I bribe, or fee:
 Look not for that: An honest heart shall give
 It's tribute, to the latest day I live.

F

Escap'd

Escap'd I'll idolize thy saving hand,
And spread thy fame thro'out the SCOTTISH land.

When riot rear'd her dire, *rebellious* head,
And struck ev'n B—— with more than common
dread,

When high in air her banners were display'd,
And more than one d---n'd S---N was afraid,
With steps as lightning quick, the *Northern* crew
In wild amazement to their goddesses flew,
Their doting goddesses. Where could they with-
draw

To safer cover than th'all-shadowing LAW?
To her You know they flew imploring aid:
And thus reply'd the wisely-tutor'd maid.

“ My SONS I with grief I view your sad surprize
“ I read your business in your down-cast eyes.

“ I

“ I see what fears---what cares invade each breast!

“ But mine it is to lull those cares to rest.

“ I ne’er with-held from you my saving hand

“ Since first I rul’d with pow’r this docile land.

“ Nay, have I once since I pursu’d the plan

“ Laid down by M----- (more than mortal man)

“ Refus’d to You my utmost skill and pow’r,

“ To kindly save you in the dang’rous hour?

“ No:---I’m your guardian in the time of need:

“ Guardian to all from t’other side the Tweed.

“ Soon at my word, all jarring sounds shall

“ cease,

“ And all your fears be gently hush’d in peace.

“ The daring chiefs that head the hostile band,

“ ’Gainst you no more shall lift a threat’ning

“ hand.

“ For

" For let their impious lives the forfeit pay,

" For acts accurs'd that shame the face of day."

" Resume your courage then: all threats defy,

" For those that bawl but Wilkes, I will—they

" die."

" T'enforce my mandate be those put in trust,

" Whose hearts are not too scrupulously just."

" Men, in whose veins a savage nature runs,

" Dealt thro' the blood from father to his sons;

" Who never heard the helpless widow's cry,

" Or wip'd the falling tear from orphan's eye;

" In whom no tender pity e'er arose

" To spare from death their supplicating foes,

" Whose breasts are steel'd against the human

" race;

" Where conscience never once has gain'd a place.

" Such

" Such be the men :---see nought the act retards :

" Bid H----- head this hour the desp'rate guards.

" And as superior worth I dearly prize,

" Next in command let stately G--- rise.

" These will at once obey my dread decree :

" And, tir'd of slaughter, bid them fly to me".

Supported thus, all inward fear withdrew,

And thirst of blood inflam'd the dastard crew

To barb'rous deeds: to deeds, were I to name,

Would stamp on man an everlasting shame.

Deeds that would damn a JEFF'RIES on record,

Tho' not a M-----, 'cause he is a LORD.

Hard was the task, I own, my lord, to find,

Such, void of ev'ry feeling for mankind,

Who all the race so far in sin excel,

As ev'n to claim supremacy in hell.

Hard had it been, but that on justice' feat
 A H--- fat, with all the pomp of state
 Immensely high : and looking lordly down,
 Struck more than wonted terror thro' the town.
 Hard had it been, but that a G--- rose,
 And crush'd in time the Scor's insulting foes
 With arms. Rever'd shall be his mighty name ;
 For all the fiends in hell shall hiss his fame.
 Fame, that alone undaunted courage yields,
 And nobly gather'd in St. GEORGE'S fields.
 Can you, my Lord, without emotion hear,
 Can you without apparent marks of fear
 Recal the actions of that bloody day,
 When the bright sun withdrew his genial ray,
 Shock'd at the fight? A fight! I dread to tell,
 When tribes of inoffensive BRITONS fell
 To

To party rage a prey ? I curse such sport,
 Tho' nobly licens'd by a tool of court.

A LORD the act with different eyes may view ;
 And what I hate may be beloved by you.

Murders I hate : all treason I despise :

Yet true to GEORGE, as Phæbus to the skies.

Detesting tyrants I revere the just,

And love the man that's steady to his trust.

Let those in rapine glory, who excel

In knavish arts, and all the tricks of hell.

Let such in sin's long servitude grown old,

Devote to death a gen'rous race for gold :

Let such, without a sigh, or feeling, hear

The orphan's cry,----or view the widow's tear :

Whilst I, who share their sorrows and distress,

Partake their joys whene'er they find redress,

In

In their defence will boldly wage the fight,
And foremost stand to drag their foes to light.

If you, my Lord, one moment would reflect,
Perhaps a mighty --- you'd detect
In all his wiles ; deeds then would strike your
fight,

That should contend for darkness with the night.
Think of an ALLEN welt'ring in his gore,
By villains murder'd at his father's door
Thro' savage wantonness. Recal the deed,
That caus'd the bosom of his fire to bleed,
Robb'd of his only pride. Thy heart must feel
Except 'tis trebly cas'd with harden'd steel :
For surely none the bloody tale can hear,
But down his cheek must flow the pitying tear.

A youth ! untimely cropt in life's gay spring ;
 A worthy son !—— a lover of his king !

When JUSTICE in rotation took her rout,
 And brisk at GUILDFORD ply'd her scales about,
 (Like Miss at school, who oft-times we perceive
 Playing the harmless game of *make believe*)

When ALLEN, burning in a noble cause,
 Came to appeal to justice and her laws,
 To call down vengeance on the murd'rer's head,
 By whose base hand his son unjustly bled ;
 Why did you wave that duty, which was due
 From ev'ry upright m-----e like You
 To God, his king, and country ? why gave place
 To any, in so critical a case ?
 Best is it known to you from whence arose
 So rash an act, ----- a handle for your foes ;

H

F

I, for my part, shall never sigh to wear
 The fame you got, the -----s you must bear.
 You judg'd it right perhaps to leave the town,
 (For WILKES at last was suffer'd to come down)
 Knowing in proper channels all would run,
 That S--- would do what M--- would have
 done.

In this degen'rate age, where is there found
 A man, that's constitutionally sound?
 That 'gainst a C---t will give a just decree
 In spite of pension, or a weighty fee?
 If such remain--- oh! quick let him retire
 And flee at once the all-consuming fire
 That waits his steps: Edg'd round on ev'ry side,
 Some with a Ribbon will ensnare his pride:
 Others

Others t' allure, will various charms unfold,
And, like the thund'ring god, descend in show'rs
of gold.

Why should I tell his fate?---why thus com-
plain?

Since few can now,---or will the siege sustain;
Since most, voracious take the gilded pill,
And make their conscience servile to their will.

My muse, when warm with zeal is apt to stray,
And, head-strong, leave (my Lord) the proper way:
But now she checks me, ere my course is run,
And mildly asks, "pray what has CAMDEN done?"
- Exceptions wait on ev'ry gen'ral rule;
This was I early taught to know at school,
And this I've not forgot: CAMDEN arose,
And, in defiance of his mighty foes,

Dar'd

Dar'd to be just; He in the noblest cause

Maintain'd the spirit of his country's laws.

Look we for justice?---let's to CAMDEN fly:

The noble standard of INTEGRITY!

Heedless of threats, or bribes, he bravely rules:

The scourge of knaves, and m——l fools!

Others, as INT'REST prompts them, will pursue

The chace of Wealth, and keep her close in view;

At her command, their favours quick dispense

'Gainst honor, honesty, and common sense.

Oh! curs'd infection! bane of virtuous fame!

Destroying ev'n the wonted dregs of shame

Which some had left: But why should I com-

plain?

Since all complaints are trifling, as they're vain.

C--t

C---t fav'rites now regard them not a rush,
For S--- is taught to err without a blush.

S---! in whose breast humanity was found,
Who us'd to deal his mercy wide around;
Who, forc'd death's dreadful sentence to impart,
Spoke thro' his tears the anguish of his heart;
Has now that female softness laid aside,
And deals out justice with judicial pride.

When WILKES appear'd at GUILDFORD, and the
crowd

In acclamations spoke their joys aloud,
A voice thus awful thunder'd from the chair--

" If that Blasphemer's name I once more hear,

" To justice soon th' offenders will I bring,

" And scourge those daring traitors to their king."

I

This'

This flow'd not genuine from his honest heart:
 He only play'd a secondary part.
 So puss, the tamest of the tabby race,
 Buoy'd up with hopes of pension, or a place,
 Lent pug her busy paw, at his desire,
 And reach'd the nut from off the burning fire.

True 'tis, my Lord, to power all must bend;
 And so must WILKES; Britannia's dearest friend!
 But yet, dame Fortune, skill'd in ev'ry wile
 May awful frown, where late she us'd to smile;
 May raise the tortur'd from the wretched cell,
 And cast the mighty to the brink of hell.
 Be that as 'twill, my wishes are the same,
 Tho' p'rhaps as baseless as my idle dream.

When

When midnight's solemn curtain veild the
 Skies, and leaden sleep had clos'd my weary'd eyes,
 My busy fancy rovd with rapid flight,
 And brought strange visions to her wond'ring
 At CHARING-CROSS a scaffold struck her view,
 Adorn'd with trappings of the sablest hue;
 Where, for the public good, great knaves of state
 Submissive fell, beneath the stroke of Fate.
 Titles, and ribbons there promiscuous fell,
 Nor could they save one guilty soul from hell.
 But mark — the stage ascending next, she saw
 The Thane, and ——— favourite of LAW.
 Incessant joys assail'd the vaulted skies,
 The concave echoed back the joyful cries,

A starting cry'd, "ye Gods"!-- A sudden gleam,
 Soon banish'd sleep and told me 'twas a dream,
 I rose, and lo! the joyful sun had now
 Dispel'd the mists from off the mountain's brow,
 Th' auspicious omen fir'd my loyal breast,
 I thank'd the gods, and turn'd again to rest,

11. 7. 19

At Charing-Cross a scaffold struck her view

Adorn'd with trophies of the fallen hue

F I N I S

Where, for the public good, great knaves of state

Submissive fell, beneath the stroke of Fate.

Titles, and ribbons, and ornaments fell,

Nor could they save one truly foul from hell.

But mark — the sage ascending next the law

The I have, and the I have of Law.

ERRATUM.

In page 29, line 13, for gave read give

The concave echoed back the joyful cries